The Priest and the Mission Apostolate

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"FOR GOD WAS TRULY IN CHRIST, RECONCILING THE WORLD TO HIMSELF . . . BY ENTRUSTING TO US THE MESSAGE OF RECONCILIATION. ON BEHALF OF CHRIST, THEREFORE, WE ARE ACTING AS AMBASSADORS."

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A Study of the Apostolate And Its Function in the Mystical Body

by

Rev. Joseph J. Tennant

Volume 4, Number 6

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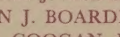

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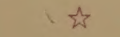

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A STUDY OF THE APOSTOLATE AND ITS FUNCTION IN THE MYSTICAL BODY

By

REV. JOSEPH J. TENNANT

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1.
Introduction

1. No priest would deny that the mission of the Church is to all men and to these indeed simultaneously. Every priest is firmly convinced that every individual human being needs the ministrations of the Sacraments and, in a lesser degree, the advantages of a social and economic environment founded on and dynamized by the teachings of the Catholic Church.

2. Few if any priests have not made this conviction a driving force of their lives or have become so positively parochial that they do not see or refuse to envision the need of foreign missions. Rather, some priests have so large a field of the harvest to sow and plow and garner that they feel justified in working their own fields and leaving to others the far distant stretches beyond their own hills. They know, too, that the mark of catholicity is recognizable in the true Church of Christ not so much by numerical extension as by universality and unity of doctrine. It is this unity of doctrine, so deeply impressed upon them in their seminary days, which causes for some a problem of prudence.

3. "Here," say they, "in our very midst, we have millions who are not Catholics. They are more likely candidates for baptism than pagans of another culture and tradition. They know our language. Many of them probably are baptized Catholics. At any rate, all of them have been brought up in a civilization and culture which are at least nominally Christian. After a hundred years of work on the foreign missions, the Church has approximately 27,000,000 Catholics there and 21,000 priests scattered over 20,000,000 square miles amidst more than 1,000,000,000 unbaptized pagans. Few of the great works of our Catholic tradition have been translated into their languages. At most, their priests, through the medium of Latin and French, can become acquainted with the glorious history of the Church. But they are very busy and can hardly be expected to read much.

Besides, the worst heresies and schisms have come out of the East, caused more than anything else by psychological, linguistic and consuetudinal differences. The harvest is great in the mission lands. True, but the soil is still hard and the rocks have not been removed from it. 'The night cometh when no man will work.' While there is still day, let us take the millions of dollars that are poured into the foreign missions; let us utilize the thousands of vocations sent to the foreign missions for our own work at home. Give us a hundred years with the same means and the same enthusiastic cooperation of the missioners and for the missioners. A soul on the home missions is no less precious to God than a soul on the foreign missions."

4. These are not the words of lazy priests nor are they the opinion of chauvinistic drum-beaters. They are a summary of opinions expressed by priests throughout this country who work as hard as any foreign missioner. They are the words of priests who are ready to die for the truth that the mission of the Church is universal at all times. They are the words of priests who are the perfect counterbalance of those foreign missioners whose attitude towards the home mission too often is one of false confidence that the needs of the home harvest are more adequately met. Both are worthy of praise for their devotion to the cause of Christ. Both claim that their opinion is the prudent means to follow to gain the whole world to Christ.

5. The priest at home is jealous of the unity and the purity of doctrine. For him, it is wiser to convert those near the Catholic center, "Festina lente," he says. The foreign missioner with a fire stolen from St. Paul declares, "I will not build upon another's foundation." God Himself was lenient at one decisive moment of history to both sides while at the same time He taught that each has something to learn from the other.

2.

The Priest's Apostolate— Sts. Peter and Paul

6. The average seminarian who exercises prudence and sincerity only knows that he wants to become a priest. Psychologically, he is in the same condition as the Apostles during those forty days before the Ascension. He is ready to work for Christ's kingdom with all his heart and soul but he does not know what his particular work will be. The story of the Apostles contains and should be a great lesson for him.

7. A careful reading of the Acts of the Apostles cannot help but lead to the conclusion that God had to wrestle with a peculiar Jewish psychology. This tended to give an interpretation to the injunction, "Going therefore, teach ye all nations," which is not unlike that of those who favor the home more than the foreign missions. What were they to teach all nations? Christ Himself while on this earth had obeyed the essential teachings of the Law. What catechism were they to use to teach the fundamental doctrines about the one true God, His nature and attributes? What better means of safeguarding the divine truths then by enjoining upon all pagans who were to come into the Church an observance of the Law of Moses, not indeed as necessary to salvation, *necessitate medii,* but rather as the surest and safest way of winning them away from the evil practices of paganism and illuminating their minds about God. After the conversion of all the Jews, a strong and large nucleus of traditionally monotheistic Christians could better assume the mission to the gentiles.

8. "Nolite sanctum dare canibus," they had been told. But what surer way to cast the pearl of doctrine to dogs than to teach the pagan about God without mentioning God's own sacred traditions of the Old Testament? As a matter of fact, why go to the pagan first at all? Why not go to the children of Israel? Had not Christ said, "I am come to the children of Israel"?

9. In the *Kommentar zum Alten Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch* by Strack-Billerbeck, there is an article of more than sixty pages on the position of the old Synagogue to the non-Jewish world. In every phase of life, the pagan was abhorred —in business, social intercourse, marriage, cultural relations and to a lesser degree even in the matter of becoming a Jew. The ancient Jew's mistrust and contempt for the Goyim were extreme.

10. The Acts of the Apostles is colored by this centuries old attitude. At first the Apostles preached to the Jews in Jerusalem. A new step forward was made at the time of the conversion of Cornelius. But God Himself had to send a special vision to Peter to prepare him for the baptism of the centurion, and even after that the Prince of the Apostles had to defend himself before the congregation of converted Jews at Jersusalem. Nor was the question then settled, for Cornelius was not an ordinary pagan. He already believed in the God of Israel and prayed at the proper times even before he became a Christian. He knew something of the Law. Likewise, the eunuch of the queen of Ethiopia was reading the prophets before he met Phillip.

11. Even after the Council of Jerusalem, the converted Jews refused to sit with the converted pagans. St. Paul in Galatians recounts very plainly that he withstood Peter to his face for giving in to the Jews who disapproved of his eating with the non-Jews. Later than all of these events, after St. Paul had presented the collection of the churches to St. James for the poor of the church of Jerusalem, not one word of thanks is recorded but concern is expressed over the fact that he was reported as not observing the Law and encouraging others to imitate him. The mob that sought his life shortly afterwards were not just anti-Christian Jews. Some of them at least, and perhaps many, were zealous Jewish Christians. This zeal for the Law caused others even to fall into the heresy that circumcision was necessary for salvation.

12. The over-zealous home missioner is likewise concerned

about the Christianity around him and sees a harvest much whiter and larger before his very eyes than his imagination can conjure up about far off mission lands.

St. Paul

13. God sanctioned this spirit in a moderate form at the Council of Jerusalem. It was allowed to live in the Church because it was not evil and did much good among the Jews. But He did not allow it to stand alone. He raised up St. Paul.

14. The very circumstances of St. Paul's election and life, an epitome of the perfect missioner, show that he is not the opposite extreme of the over-zealous home missioner but the prudent means between the then existing Judaizer and the eager foreign missioner that was to come.

15. First of all, in order to prevent the accusation that St. Paul cared little for what he did not know, the Apostle to the Gentiles was a stricter observer of the Law of Moses in all its details than any of the other Apostles. Possibly, he alone knew how to read the sacred writings in the original Hebrew. He came from a family renowned for its adherence to the Jewish Law. Secondly, born at Tarsus, he knew better than the other Apostles the abominations of the Gentiles and, as was often true in those times, had less use for them than those Jews who had no contact with them. Thirdly, his love for his people was correspondingly greater because he had to endure with them the cruel indifference and idolatry of a pagan city. Fourthly, wherever he went, he tried first to make friends with the Jews and only upon being rebuffed did he turn to the Gentiles. He never lost his love for his own people.

16. Yet, Jew of Jews, Pharisee of Pharisees that he was, St. Paul became the first great foreign missioner. It is necessary only to take the first few chapters of the first epistle to the Thessalonians to see what a tremendous transformation had taken place in him. Forced to flee ignominiously from Thessalonica to Beroea and thence to Athens, he could not help thinking of the Thessalonians with whom he had stayed but a short few

weeks. He sent Timothy and Silvanus up to Thessalonica to discover what was the condition of the Church there. At Corinth, the two met St. Paul and told him the good news. The Thessalonians were all asking for him and staunch in the Faith.

17. If St. Paul were not divinely inspired in writing that epistle with which he answered them, one could hardly be blamed for accusing him of an obnoxious form of oleaginous exaggeration. It would be the highest ideal of the priestly spirit to be able to say to a congregation whom a priest had known only a few weeks, "What is our hope, or joy, or crown of glory, if not you before our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? Yes, you are our glory and joy." (1 *Thess.* 2: 19). Or again, "What thanks can we return to God for you for all the joy wherewith we rejoice for your sakes before our God? Night and day we pray more and more that we may see you again, and may supply those things that are lacking to your faith." (1 *Thess.* 3: 9).

18. Perhaps no priest has suffered as much from a parish as St. Paul did with the Corinthians newly converted from paganism. Yet in the enumeration of all their faults in the first epistle to them, there is a single thread of unity—his love for them and his fatherly confidence that they can become better. Only a loving father could thunder out, "I thank God that I baptized none of you." (1 *Cor.* 1: 14), and then whisper, "For although you have ten thousand tutors in Christ, yet you have not many fathers. For in Christ Jesus, through the gospel, did I beget you." (1 *Cor.* 4:15). And to these same Corinthians, after they had insulted him either personally or through a messenger and had questioned his constancy of purpose, yes, even the validity of his mission to them, he can write, "Our heart is open wide to you. In us there is no lack of room for you but in your heart there is no room for us. Now as having a recompense in like kind—I speak as to my children—be you also open wide to us." (2 *Cor.* 6: 11). "Make room for us. We have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we have taken advantage of no one. . . . You are in our hearts to die together and to live together. Great is my confidence in you, great my boasting about you." (2 *Cor.* 7: 2). "I am jealous for you with a divine

jealousy. For I betrothed you to one spouse, that I might present you as a chaste virgin unto Christ." (2 *Cor.* 11: 2). "I will not be a burden to you; for I do not seek yours, but you. For the children should not save up for the parents, but the parents for the children. But I will most gladly spend and be spent myself for your souls, even though, loving you more, I be loved less." (2 *Cor.* 12: 14). Towards the end of all these appeals, he says, divinely inspired as he is, "We speak before God in Christ." (2 *Cor.* 12: 19). Such a love of a Jew for non-Jews is almost incredible. It is certainly unexampled in the historical documents of the world.

19. It was this love that made St. Paul journey from one end of the then known world to the other. It was a participation of the love of the Divine Saviour for mankind, Who said, "Other sheep I have that are not of this fold. Greater love then this hath no man than that he should lay down his life for his friend."

20. Love, even the purest love, such as that of St. Paul for his Gentile converts, could very easily be expected to go to extremes of leniency with a consequent convenient glossing of hard truths or with the disastrous effect of being inconsistent. He had indeed gone very far. The epistle to the Romans is regarded as an epitome of his teaching. Therein little is said of the history of the Jews. His interpretation of the faith of Abraham was in itself an official declaration that the Law of Moses was dead, so much so that even the natural law could not appeal to it for its sanction. If that epistle alone were all that time had left of St. Paul, the date of its composition could be argued as being some time later than the destruction of Jerusalem itself. One would think that Judaism had almost been obliterated, that the Temple had been destroyed and the Jews a wandering, pitiful people, forgotten at least for a time by God Himself. And chief of all, the conclusion might be drawn that Paul had turned his face only to the Gentiles.

21. History tells another story. St. Paul is the outstanding exemplar of the Church's catholicity, of her unity amidst multiplicity. Throughout his epistles, he is anxious for the purity

and consistency of his doctrine. For him these qualities of his teaching did not depend on his own convictions however strong they might be. In *Galatians* (2: 2) he says, "I conferred with them (the Apostles at Jerusalem) on the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but separately with the men of authority; lest perhaps I should be running, or had run in vain." He is aware that he is sent by a higher authority, "For we are not going beyond our commission, as if it did not embrace you." (2 *Cor.* 10: 14). Especially in the pastoral epistles, he is continually anxious lest the true teaching be adulterated.

22. His conviction that his teaching is of divine origin and unalterable is so great that he can say, "But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel to you other than that which we have preached to you, let him be anathema!" (*Gal.* 1: 8). And he repeats the terrible condemnation, he whose heart could overflow with love for his dear Corinthians, his Corinthians whom he knew were proud and contentious, tolerating incest, lying to and cheating one another, condoning fornication, pietistic about marriage, trying to keep in society by going to sacrificial banquets, insulting the Holy Eucharist, vain about their spiritual gifts and even in part denying the resurrection of the body; but there could be no tolerance of falsity of doctrine for there had to be and there was, "One Lord, one faith, and one baptism."

23. The great apostle had turned his face to the Gentiles but he never forgot the Jews. Solemnly he declares, "I speak the truth in Christ, I do not lie, my conscience bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, that I have great sadness and continuous sorrow in my heart, for I wished myself to be an anathema from Christ for my brethren, who are my kinsmen according to the flesh." (*Romans,* 9, 1 ff.). He gathered a collection for the Church in Jerusalem from all the Churches in the Mediterranean basin. For him it was a great symbol of unity. It enables all to be apostles, for he says, "For according to their means . . . yea, beyond their means, they gave earnestly begging of us the favor of sharing in the ministry that is in behalf of the saints." (2 *Cor.* 8: 3).

24. And this unity is not merely external but finds its connecting link in heaven itself for "the administration of this service not only supplied the want of the saints, but overflows also in much gratitude to the Lord. The evidence furnished by this service makes them glorify God for your obedient profession of Christ's gospel and for the sincere generosity of your contributions to them and to all; while they themselves, in their prayers for you, yearn for you, because of the excellent grace God has given you." (2 *Cor.* 10: 12). When the Jewish Christians of Jerusalem needed priestly encouragement, St. Paul could turn away from the Gentiles back to them, for his great epistle on the priesthood of Christ was written to them in their hour of need.

St. Peter

25. St. Peter, the first Pope, had of necessity to be an active missioner. By divine dispensation, the gospel for the circumcised was given to Peter (*Gal.* 2: 8 ff.). But the Holy Spirit sent the first Gentile to him to be baptized (*Acts*, 10: 1). St. Peter, the apostle to the Jews, first publicly defended the baptism of uncircumcised pagans (*Acts* 15: 7) which statement was at the same time a public profession of his faith that the gospel of Christ, without any trappings or props from other sources, could lead mankind to the truth of salvation. When St. Paul reproved him for acting ambiguously towards the Gentiles, he is not reported as having tried to defend his conduct, (*Gal.* 2: 11 ff.). He chose Rome as his diocesan seat instead of Jerusalem. He died a martyr's death not among the Palestinian Jews but in the centre of paganism, Babylon as he called it. All of these facts are fittingly recounted of the Vicar of Christ. Had they not been handed down by divine inspiration, at least the spirit of them could have been attributed to the Prince of the Apostles because all of his successors have been imbued with the same universal vision.

26. But not every Apostle was so ready to act in the same fashion, even though he believed that the Law of Moses was dead. St. James, the first Bishop of Jerusalem, was anxious for at least an external observance of some of the precepts of the

Law, as is seen at the Council of Jerusalem, (*Acts*, 15: 13 ff.). When St. Paul came to Jerusalem, St. James cautioned him to observe the Law while in the city, (*Acts*, 21: 17 ff.). St. James was highly regarded by all the inhabitants of Jerusalem. He would not have been so esteemed, had he not been a very careful observor of the Law of Moses. But neither St. Peter nor St. James was wrong. The ways of Divine Providence, however, through the destruction of the Temple and the worldwide dispersion of the Jews have intermingled the mission to the Jews and that to the Gentiles so closely that they must be considered as one. The time is soon coming for this generation when all will see clearly and without misgiving that a worldwide society, founded on Christian principles, is necessary for the peaceful life of the Church, unless she is to return to the Catacombs.

3.
The Mystical Body

27. Wherein lay St. Paul's secret for such many-sided and diverse activity? He called himself the Apostle to the Gentiles, but still he could swear before God that he was ready at any given moment to die for the Jews. He plans to go to the very ends of the earth to preach Christ (*Romans*, 15: 24) while at the same time he is ready to die working for the single community of the Corinthians. He is mistrusted by many of the Jewish Christians and, nevertheless, he takes up a collection for them, not without much insult and ingratitude. He puts the Gentile on the same footing with the Jew before God but warns the Gentiles not to boast against the natural branches. (*Romans*, 11: 17). There is a whole world to win to Christ, nevertheless he spends precious time making tents. Throughout his whole life there is an unmistakable consistency based on a vividly conscious conviction of the Mystical Body of Christ.

28. Paul was first taught the doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ because of his sins, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" He lived a noble member of it, a vessel of election, till he shed

his blood at Rome.* The outstanding point for a priest with regard to the Mystical Body is that it is *whole*, a complete substance capable of accidental additions. Nowhere does St. Paul portray Christ's Mystical Body as unformed. From this it follows that the priest or any member of the Mystical Body works, not as external to it by bringing something *to* the Mystical Body from the outside, but rather he is an integral part of the Mystical Body, working imminently from the inside to the outside. He can never, except in imagination, see the whole Mystical Body as detached from himself. Wherever the priest goes, he brings the whole Mystical Body with him.

29. St. Paul was aware of this, for only a most lively realization of this doctrine would have moved him to apply it to the case of the impure Corinthians, "Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a harlot?" (1 *Cor.* 6: 15). With reverence and respect for Jesus Christ, the author of all purity, let it be said that St. Paul dared not say the Mystical Body of Christ. In the verse that follows the above, he adumbrates his meaning, "Or do you not know that he who cleaves to a harlot, becomes one body with her?" (Herein lies the Christian horror of impurity.)

30. This explains the paradoxes of St. Paul. Whatever he did, he did as a member of the Mystical Body of Christ; his activity was that of a fully formed member of a fully formed body. He knew his place in it, for had he not said that all must have a place in that body? (Cf. 1 *Cor.* 12: 4 ff.) and does he not give his credentials in *Ephesians* 3: 1 ff.? So whatever he did according to his place in the Mystical Body, the whole Church did, and whatever the rest of the Church was doing he was doing. For he and the rest of the Church were "all one in Christ Jesus." Making tents, in itself, may not appear a very important exercise for one of some possibly hundred missioners when the whole world was pagan, but as a logical part of

* Confer the study *The Laity and the Mission Apostolate* for a fuller treatment of the circumstances under which St. Paul first taught the doctrine of the Mystical Body.

St. Paul's duty as an apostle (Cf. 1 *Cor.* 9: 1-end for a most moving proof) making tents was the work of the *whole* Mystical Body of Christ.

31. Going to Spain and stopping off on the way at Corinth ready to die for the Corinthians were equally important works. His prison in Rome was the dwelling of the King of Kings, and the bending of his head to the executioner was no more serious a loss, in his eyes, than the near drowning he endured at Malta, for the Mystical Body of Christ is proof against flesh and blood. And as for him his words stand, "Always full of courage, then, and knowing that while we are in the body we are exiled from the Lord—for we walk by faith and not by sight—we even have the courage to prefer to be exiled from the body and to be at home with the Lord." (2 *Cor.* 5: 6 ff.).

32. Herein lies for every priest the source of a world vision that can focus itself on the pinpoint of instructing one backward child for first Holy Communion or baptizing a thousand souls. The priest is not working *for* the Mystical Body but the *whole* Mystical Body is working *through* him. Neither he nor any other member of the Mystical Body can ever work alone. "If one member suffers anything, all the members suffer with it, or if one member glories, all the members rejoice with it." (1 *Cor.* 12: 26).

33. The foreign missioner has a place in the Mystical Body. St. Paul gives them the first place, (1 *Cor.* 10: 28) but whether it be first or last, the only important thing for the individual is to have charity, from which no member of the Mystical Body is exempt. Charity is the lifeblood of the Mystical Body. And it is through charity that there will be no disunion in the body, but the members will have care for one another. (Cf. 1 *Cor.* 12: 25).

34. Now, the Mystical Body of Christ is the Visible Church and it is for the Vicar of Christ to determine what places in the world are so developed to safeguard such fitting honor to God that the Christians there may go on perpetuating the Church in their own area without his immediate solicitous care. In effect, the designation of a place as a mission, prefecture or vicariate

is the Holy Father's call to all the members of the Mystical Body that there is a place where Christ needs most help. No member is exempt from that call. Least of all are the priests, who are as it were arteries of divine grace.

35. "Outside the Church, no salvation" may well be the battle-cry of those who love mankind for the sake of God. It is not merely a decretalist's condemnation of the unbaptized. It is the urging charity of God burning in the hearts of those who love Him, eager to bring life to those who are dying. It is the warning cry to every member of the Mystical Body to do what he can to prevent the loss of so many souls to Christ who died for each and every one of them. It is written in the heart of every priest. That is why he is a priest. The records of history recount only a few of the names that are written in heaven of those who knew only with sorrow in their hearts the terrible meaning of those words.

36. At no time perhaps in the history of the Church is there more need of a concerted effort on the part of every member of the Church to help the missions. Indeed, it may be asked whether the distinction of home and foreign missions is valid for these times when China is nearer to New York than Albany was a hundred and fifty years ago. A strong communistic China and eastern Europe are more likely to affect the affairs of any given parish within the next ten years than even its own neighbor could. The world is becoming smaller but with so many diverse materialistic cross-purposes in it that it may well destroy itself. Unless it be reduced to the simple unity of the doctrine of the Mystical Body, it might explode.

4.
The Parish Priest

37. Time has obscured the unique missionary role of the parish priest. St. Paul in his enumeration of the places held in the Mystical Body (1 *Cor.* 12: 4 ff. and 27 ff.) did not mention him explicitly because the Church had not yet been sufficiently

established anywhere. But the parish priest has concentrated in himself the offices of prophet, teacher and administrator. Without his help, the work of the missioners to the world would never be finished. Wherever he is forced to leave, there the work of the missioner must soon begin all over again. The work of the parish priest is indeed the very flowering of all missionary effort. His labors are the continuation of those of the missioner in a restricted field. The parish priest without the missioner's preliminary efforts would never have existed. The missioner who labors without the hope of one day establishing parish priests on his foundation has an incomplete vision of his mission.

38. Mourret in his *History of the Catholic Church,* Vol. 3, p. 178 (Trans. Thompson) says of the parish priest:

> Laboring under the direction of the bishops and at the side of the monks, the humble secular country clergy should not be forgotten. In the fourth century a most important event occurred in the history of the Church: the rural parish was born. It made its appearance in the Narbonne part of Gaul, and spread from there among the Burgundians and the Franks. Near a chapel erected to the memory of some saint, a priest took up his residence: with the offerings placed on the altar, a patrimony was constituted to the venerated saint. The people formed the habit of coming to the chapel to receive the sacraments, listen to the preaching, and attend the Holy Sacrifice. It became their meeting place. Thus the parish was founded. In the sixth century the bishops recognized the autonomy of this new organization. The priest serving the chapel, who at that time was called the "priest rector," "diocesan priest," "priest of the people," was nearly always, from that time on designated at a public meeting by the archdeacon, with the approval of the inhabitants. He himself belonged to the popular classes.
>
> 39. The chronicles of the time have little to say about him. The monastic annalists tell mostly of the labors of the monks. The activities of the bishops, who for the most part belonged to the great Gallo-Roman families and were more or less engaged in the public affairs of the nation, could not pass unnoticed. But no one thought of trans-

mitting to posterity the names of those village pastors who, in a hidden, uneventful ministry, were administering the sacraments, reforming popular morals by the rough discipline of penance, were prudently and wisely distributing the bread of the apostolic word and that of the Eucharist, while the monks, most of them simply tonsured, did not go beyond instructing the barbarians and offering the edification of their own virtues. These humble priests were also the originators of public liberties. It was in the "parish meetings," presided over by the pastor, that the people might become acquainted with the management of public funds and learned to discuss matters of general interest to the community. The village movement of the Middle Ages owed more to the Christian parish than to the Roman municipium. Unknown heroes, whose names are not found even in the list of the saints, these hard-working pastors of the sixth, seventh, eighth centuries, deserve the praise and homage which history has so often failed to give them.

5.
The Missionary Union of the Clergy

40. In view of this that the priest brings with him wherever he goes the whole Mystical Body of Christ, there can be no room for discouragement in his heart, even if there were one priest in the world and no one but himself a Catholic. Neither can there be a valid reason for planning the conversion of the world after the fashion of a world-wide business agency which maps out the whole world in sections and systematically proceeding from a central point with ever increasingly larger radii, gradually covers the whole world, caring not for the masses which at any given time do not have the product. No living organism functions like a machine. Divine love, which is the life of the Mystical Body, knows no boundaries nor does it create obstacles for itself. The priest, as any other member of the Mystical Body, pulsates

with the life of God in proportion as he loves souls, his own and those of others. The love of souls by priests has already transformed the face of this world, so much so that its very dissensions of the moment have a meaning only in the light of Christianity.

41. But the urgency of present times, with at least 1,700,000,000 souls ready victims for a materialism based on a scientism boasting of more and more conquests for luxury and ease, and the lightning-like rapidity and easy frequency of modern methods of propaganda, demands a supreme effort from every single priest for the salvation of souls. It is difficult to discern clearly where the danger is greater, in one's own parish or in a village of China. The war of 1941-1945 stripped this country of five thousand priests whose absence was perceptibly felt. Yet what wonderful work five thousand priests could have done on the missions? And what extraordinary results they did accomplish in following the youth of America throughout the world?

42. Should more priests become missioners and leave their flocks at home? Or should greater efforts be extended to gain souls at home and thus consolidate the position of Catholics already living in large communities? The Holy See alone can answer those questions. But no parish priest has to feel that his work is retarding the foreign mission effort or is in any competition with it. His work and that of the missioner are simultaneously harmonious but distinct activities of the Mystical Body of Christ. By realizing this he will achieve unity in a multiplicity of works; ever conscious as he will be that what he is doing for others is, in the love of Christ, actually being done for his own flock, and what he is doing for his own is being done for all.

43. There is no lack of mission aid organizations in this country which by their intensive programs could exhaust all the time a priest could give to mission-aid work. Likewise, priests who would choose to do so, could make up for themselves and their people excellent programs for helping the missions. In fact, this initiative is a very desirable thing, but because of the numerous, time-consuming duties of the priest it is not likely that most priests would develop such programs. Yet unless the

priests have some kind of a mission program for the people, their people will be deprived of many blessings and the missions will suffer.

44. It remains therefore that some agency should keep alive in the priests the realization of the world-wide mission activity of the Church in their own generation. This agency should not destroy their initiative but should be rather of a helpful nature, suggesting to priests a multiplicity of ways to help the missions. They would not be obliged by any sort of diocesan regulation to accept or put to use any of the suggestions received. Thereby, the whole work would be spontaneous on the part of the priest and at the same time would make for a unified, steady effort. This agency, by its aim to arouse a willing spirit to aid *all* missioners in *all* mission lands, would check the provincial tendency to aid only one or two mission Orders to the positive exclusion of all the others. This narrow attitude is harmful to the work of the missions because it restricts the view of both priests and people, by concentrating their attention too much on only a small field, for there is no single mission order or congregation in modern times whose activities alone could give an adequate picture of the vast extent of the mission effort of the whole Church.

45. It is most fitting that the Holy See has established just such an agency in the Missionary Union of the Clergy. The mission Orders and Congregations are singly given specific spheres or zones of influence in the mission fields. It would be a serious drain on the personnel of any one of them to have to try to accomplish on a world-wide scale the aims of the *Unio Cleri*.

46. Furthermore, it would be a dissipation of their own efforts and would in part deprive them of a reason for their existence. The Benedictine spirit, the Franciscan, the Dominican, the Ignatian spirit, all of these and many more are precious expressions of the spirit of Christ, each with its own characteristics, appealing to different souls. There is something contradictory and almost disloyal about asking one Order to suppress the full expression of its own spirit to help all the others. On the other hand, the great majority of priests are not professed sons of any

of these saints. Likewise the people are not bound by any special ties to one Order more than other. Neither should they be, because this would mean the extinction of the others. The Missionary Union of the Clergy solves this problem of unity amidst multiplicity. Because it is universal in its outlook and because of this universal point of view, it can consistently, with full charity, urge support for any mission activity recognized by the Church. For this same reason also, it would be inconsistent with the aims of the Missionary Academia to present any other plan than that of the *Unio Cleri*.

47. The Missionary Union of the Clergy is but a clearer expression and its aims a short epitome of the means to the goal towards which priests have always been striving—the sanctification of souls. It might well have been established in the 4th century as in the twentieth. Its purpose is not that of smug isolation seeking to band together those priests who are interested in the missions as though it were a work of supererogation. The *Unio Cleri* is the voice of Peter telling the whole world through his priests that every Catholic by reason of baptism is a missioner according to his place in the Mystical Body. The foreign missioner should not be looked upon as one doing a work beyond the normal activity of Christ's Mystical Body. He is the noble, visible instrument of an activity in which the whole shares and by which it is strengthened. The Missionary Union of the Clergy is the Church's approved means of enabling every priest to express in an unmistakable way his love for every soul that comes into this world.

48. No other organization in the Church is better adapted to bring into frequent and effective exercise that great paradox of the Christian faith—namely, that the Church is for the salvation of every human soul, but yet for the salvation of one she is ready to sacrifice her whole efficient external organization and call upon all to suffer martyrdom. Witness England. The *Unio Cleri* emphasizes the great need of the many millions of souls in the mission lands but at the same time does not call upon priests to abandon those at home.

49. The first statute reads: "The Missionary Union of the

Clergy was formed for the purpose of putting at the service of the Church in her apostolate the organized work of priests in order to promote among Catholics a more lively interest and a wider cooperation in the work of the missions." In effect this statute clearly indicates that the *Unio Cleri* is not an indirect means of urging parish priests to join mission Orders. On the other hand, it reminds him that the mission apostolate is an essential part of the proper formation of every good Catholic, which means, of all his parishioners. In other words, by reason of the effect that he, the parish priest, can produce, he is one of the most important missioners. Divine Providence could have organized the Church otherwise, but in the present economy of salvation, the proper formation of the laity rests with the parish priest. If his zeal for the missions is not evidenced by his wholehearted effort to instill an apostolic fervor in his people, they in turn, as a parish, will have little love for the missions and will suffer thereby, because they will lack an outstanding element of Catholicism, and will be deprived of a most efficient means of personal sanctification.

50. A lack of interest in missions on the part of the parish clergy puts the whole mission effort out of focus in the minds of the laity. They come to regard missioners as some peculiar sort of gregarious anchorite, useful in the Church, because they win souls that otherwise would have been lost through nobody's fault, but not altogether necessary, because without them Divine Providence would not deny these souls the graces they need. By reason of the interest of the parish clergy, the people come to realize that the mission apostolate is an ordinary part of the work of the Church requiring their prayers and cooperation. Vocations to the foreign missions would be stimulated more easily.

6.
Program of the Unio Cleri

51. The aim of the *Unio Cleri*—the salvation of souls—and the means used to achieve this purpose are not new. The *Unio Cleri* merely organizes the effort and by so doing aims to move all to still greater endeavors. The means employed by the Mis-

sionary Union are five in number: prayer, propaganda, fostering of vocations, endeavors to bring back schismatics and heretics to the Church and lastly stimulation of the growth and progress of the Pontifical Mission Aid Societies.

52. The very enumeration of these means in itself constantly reminds the priest that only by sanctifying others can he come to sanctify himself. Canonical boundaries are necessary for the proper exercise of jurisdiction but no boundaries can be put on a priest's love for souls. Let him observe the boundaries where they do apply but not erect them where they cannot exist.

53. The means employed by the *Unio Cleri* are not just indirect attempts to get priests to do something they are not doing but should do. Rather, the sole effect of the *Unio Cleri* should be for most priests the realization that what they are actually doing is being done regularly by every other brother priest for the one great purpose—the winning of the whole world for Jesus Christ. Through the Quarterly Bulletin of the Union and the Monthly News Note, they are being constantly reminded of the magnitude of the task before them and are spurred on to do their share unremittingly, however small it may appear to the individual. The greatest love for souls will not and cannot infuse a real knowledge of the actual needs of the Church which constitute the immediate ends for which she is working. But how can a priest know the needs of the Church unless he is told? The *Unio Cleri* will supply him with information in abundance.

Prayer

54. Prayer for the eternal welfare of souls is the most efficacious means of conforming one's own will to the will of God. Prayer for missions is such a prayer in an eminent degree. A fundamental dogma of the Church is that God wills that all men of every generation and condition be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. By using the information about the missions from the *Unio Cleri,* the priest can multiply this act of conformity with the divine will many times so that zeal for souls will become an ever present motive with him in dealing with

every individual whom he meets. It will enable him to overcome many temptations and make many of his burdens light. To regard mission literature as a source of intentions for prayer will change his attitude toward some mission appeals and tend to make him feel kindly towards those importunate ones more skillful or at least more persevering in begging.

55. No aspect of the mission effort will evoke from him anything but a charitable response—which does not mean money in most cases. How many billions of times has the Divine Office been said devoutly without any specific mention of mission needs? According to the sincerity of his supplications, the priest increases his own sanctified interest in the things he prays for. Lastly and most important of all, prayer is the public recognition of the whole Church Militant that she can do nothing of herself but that all depends on God. Without prayer, the mission effort of the Church would be the most proud and at the same time most Quixotic gesture of Pelagianism the world could ever see.

Propaganda

56. There are two aspects of this which are respectively creative and auxiliary. In his preaching and in suggestions of intentions for prayer to the people, the priest is creating propaganda. Every member of the *Unio Cleri* is expected to stress the missions in his sermons whenever he reasonably can do so and to cooperate with requests to speak for the missions. Public devotions give numberless opportunities for adding a prayer for the missions. In this way, the people are not merely being reminded in a speculative way of the missions but are uniting with the priest in doing the most important thing for them—praying. It is almost unnecessary to suggest to the ingenuity of the priest the numerous channels at his disposal for propaganda.

57. The priest is an auxiliary in propaganda when he allows literature to be distributed easily and widely among his people. His cooperation with visiting missionaries aids the work of the missions more than he realizes. Any priest who goes about making appeals knows that an evidence of sincere goodwill on the

part of the pastor towards his cause disposes the people more than the best sermon. Sometimes pastors, like parents, are too shy and modest about the effect their opinion has upon their charges.

Fostering Vocations

It is in this matter more than in anything else that the Missionary Union of the Clergy has something new to say to priests. It is simply this—go out and look for vocations. Cardinal Villeneuve, in his address to the assembled delegates in Canada at the Congress for the Recruitment of Vocations, pointed out that the usual attitude towards a vocation, namely that it is a response to a peculiar supernatural call recognizable in some ineffable way by the one called, who in turn should be tried as by fire, is outmoded. He showed that this attitude is a result of early Rennaissance and post-Reformation times when younger sons and daughters were forced into a religious life to ease the strain on the family finances.

59. As a counter-effort to keep out those who were not disposed towards such a life, emphasis was placed upon the need of a call to the priestly life. The result has been that in some instances both clergy and laity are slow to encourage expressions of a desire to become a priest especially among those in their early years of adolescence. On the positive side, the Cardinal declared that any Christian of the male sex, endowed with the normal physical, mental and moral qualifications, is a possible candidate for the priesthood. Some young men, possessed of all these, are not even addressed once about the priestly vocation. Very often, petty misconceptions that could be removed in a short conversation, silence an otherwise eager heart.

60. No more striking illustration of the truth of the Cardinal's teaching can be found than the public practice of the Church herself. The Church in her recruitment of the native clergy in the mission fields shows a daring that might easily scandalize those who expect something short of a miracle in the calling of candidates to the priesthood. Almost any boy with the right qualifications is sent to the minor seminary at the age of twelve if he so wishes. Sometimes, they are the children of pagans. A great

number leave after a short while, but notwithstanding the expense and the inevitable wear and tear on the priest-teachers' nerves, the Church continues to send them.

61. The Pontifical Association for Priestly Vocations is another example of the attitude of the Church towards vocations. Vocations must be sought out. The soil in which they grow must be cultivated and when once the desire is expressed every effort must be made to foster the vocation. The aim of this Association is to establish itself in every diocese of the world.

62. Herein the Missionary Union identifies itself with the principal hope of the Church. All its members are asked to foster vocations by prayer and actual cooperation with possible candidates. It would be trite to emphasize that the need for priests is greater than ever. It does not do merely to say that there are more priests in China than there are in England or some such similar statistical truism. The main thing for the priest member is to be aware that he is a special instrument of Divine Providence in finding the vocations that are needed, and that his field is his parish, the altar boys, the teams, dramatic clubs, the Junior Holy Name Society, the Confraternity classes, the C.S.M.C., and various sodalities.

63. The universality of the Missionary Union will serve also to break down the most damaging form of provincialism to which a priest is liable—encouraging only those interested in vocations for the diocese. In one sense, this attitude is almost inevitable because of lack of information about other diocese and Religious Orders. Not infrequently it is due to a false enthusiasm of a regular priest who is just as provincial as the parish priest. The latter reacts with a pardonable zeal for an equally worthy cause. The priest should be interested in all vocations to the priesthood and help them according to his means and circumstances.

Union of Schismatics and Heretics

64. This aim of the *Unio Cleri* links it with home missions unmistakably. Whatever has been said of prayer and propaganda above applies with equal force for all members of the

Union in helping the home missions. This aim to foster and effect unity of faith in the peoples of the world must of necessity be for the priest in America a much more immediately live problem than in some other countries. By his efforts to win non-Catholics to the Faith, he is asserting clearly and without equivocation the unity and the universality of the Christian faith. The more active priests are in convert work the more telling can be the refutation of the argument of some pagans that Christianity is a multiplicity of conflicting beliefs about one God whereas they have unity of faith about a multiplicity of Gods.

65. The prosecution of this aim of the *Unio Cleri* requires that the priest look beyond the borders of his own country, because of the great numbers of heretics and schismatics of the dissident Eastern churches. Because of the comparative purity of their doctrine and their close adherence to ancient Catholic liturgy, and in view of the never-ending efforts of the Holy See to unite them again with the see of Peter, they should never be omitted from the prayers of priests. The names of titular sees are, as it were, a prayerful memento of a sorrowful mother for children who have abandoned her. Remembrance of these churches should be a constant warning to all priests that what happened in the Middle Eastern regions can also happen here unless every effort is made to keep the people close to the see of Peter. Charity towards the dissident Eastern churches through prayer and aid to missioners working among them may well be considered a powerful prayer for the people of America that God may spare them the cup of wrath which He has poured out in the Near East.

66. No better examples could the priest find for this work than Sts. Peter and Paul. Peter was entrusted with the mission to his own people—the Jews—most of whom were in Palestine. Yet he died a martyr at the hands of pagans at Rome. Paul was made the apostle to the Gentiles but he was ready to die for the conversion of the Jews. The exclusive prosecution of the home mission with little or no regard to the foreign missions is not according to the spirit of the Church. Neither is the exclusive prosecution of the foreign missions. The greatest unity of

intention with regard to both is found in sincere prayer and sanctified interest in both according to circumstances. The material support of both will come as a result of this prayerful spirit and interest.

67. The spirit of Christ is found in human hearts and it will never die. Nor can its potentialities in human hearts be measured by the number of human hearts, because that spirit comes from above. It does not reside in the walls of buildings nor can its intensity be measured by the mere counting of baptized heads. At no time is it possible to predict its activity in a given time. But it can do all things. With unshakable confidence in it, the priest of America can look with calm courage at the vast work before him in his own land and accomplish results that can only be measured by God Himself.

Cooperation with Pontifical Mission Aid Societies

68. Every director of a mission-aid society knows that without the cooperation of the parish priests it would be impossible for the society to prosper. The permission of the parish priest publicly given to any society is of more value than thousands of letters sent to individual parishioners. Both Popes Benedict XV and Pius XI have publicly recognized this and for that reason have urged that all priests become members of the Missionary Union of the Clergy, for one of its chief aims is to make the Pontifical Mission Aid Societies known and supported in their parishes. There are three mission aid societies in the world that are pontifical—The Society for the Propagation of the Faith, The Society of St. Peter the Apostle for Native Clergy, and the Association of the Holy Childhood.

The Society for the Propagation of the Faith

69. The parish priest can help in a multiplicity of ways provided he clearly sees the aim of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith. The Society for the Propagation of the Faith is

not seeking money alone. Its purpose is to obtain members who will by active membership in the Society become interested in the missions and help it to bring aid to the missions through prayer and sacrifice. By this means, the people will become actively mission-minded and will be ready to do their share as members of the Mystical Body of Christ. So important is the membership in The Society for the Propagation of the Faith that it is the wish of the Holy See that no other mission aid organization should be joined before joining it. This wish springs from the firm conviction that active membership in The Society for the Propagation of the Faith will lead to increased cooperation with other societies.

70. A member of the Society is expected to say daily one "Our Father," a "Hail Mary" and the ejaculation, "St. Francis Xavier, pray for us." The constant repetition of these prayers alone is a great part of the laity's contribution to the mission cause. It is the best remote preparation for other propaganda to make people mission-minded.

71. For that reason, no greater help could the parish priest give to the missions than to use his influence with his people to make every one of them a member of The Society for the Propagation of the Faith. He should realize that membership can begin from any day so that a parochial drive could be made by him throughout the year.

72. Because the aim of the Society is membership, the priest should not feel content that his people have given a large sum. A hundred dollars from one person represents only one member praying. A hundred dollars from one hundred people represent a contribution of one hundred dollars plus the prayers of one hundred people. Moreover, continued membership on the part of the same people in large numbers would mean that the contributions of the faithful would be constant and not dependent upon eventual changes of circumstances. As it is, because of the interest in the bulk sum of money but not in membership, the people lack a ready incentive to keep their contributions steady. The persistent giving of a little from everyone would

mean a greater number sharing in the work of the missions and at the same time would increase the annual contribution very greatly. As St. Paul says with regard to the collection of the churches for Jerusalem, "For I do not mean that the relief of others should become your burden, but that there should be an equality (2 *Cor.* 8; 13)," so should it be today.

73. The realization that the gaining and keeping of members are the chief aims of The Society for the Propagation of the Faith, would also create a greater understanding of the meaning of much of the literature that is offered by the Society. It is to be admitted that much of it is not necessary in some parishes to arouse the generosity of the people but this literature, especially *Catholic Missions,* does affect the renewal of membership.

74. Moreover, membership in The Society for the Propagation of the Faith is a ready means of giving parishioners many spiritual blessings, for this Society is enriched with more spiritual benefits for its members than any other mission aid society in the Church. Whoever has the *cura animarum* must think twice before neglecting these blessings for his parish, especially in view of the repeated statements of the Popes that all should be enrolled in this Society. Outside of exhorting parishioners to more frequent Holy Communion, there is no more efficacious means of blessing a parish than to have as large a membership in The Society for the Propagation of the Faith as possible.

The Society of St. Peter the Apostle for Native Clergy

75. This Society is in charge of the National Director of The Society for the Propagation of the Faith and every diocesan director of The Society for the Propagation of the Faith is likewise the diocesan director for the Society of St. Peter the Apostle. Its purpose is to enlist the prayers of the Christian world for the increase of native vocations in the mission fields and to supply the means for the maintenance of the seminaries. Because one of the chief aims of the Missionary Union is to increase vocations, it is to be expected that every member will cooperate in making this Society known. It affords nearly every priest the

means of educating at least one student for the priesthood, for the cost of an annual pension is small, the offering varying according to the country wherein the seminary is located.

76. The diffusion of propaganda by the priest among his people concerning this society will accomplish two ends—one educational, and the other practical. The aim of the Society of St. Peter the Apostle is so to increase the number of native clergy in the mission lands that there will be little or no need of sending missioners to them. Emphasis on this point in talks to the people will give them a universal point of view. *They will cease to regard the Christian Faith as a gift of the Western world to the missions, a gift which must always be administered by occidental priests.*

77. By realizing that in the plan of God the people of the mission lands are expected so to develop in the Faith that they will have their own hierarchy and clergy, the laity at home will gain a sense of unity with them that could hardly be taught in any other way. The link is a very natural and human one—for the ideals and obligations of a Catholic touch his innermost heart and give him immediately a sympathy for and an understanding of another Catholic for which there is no substitute in human relations.

78. From a practical point of view, this Society is answering in an extraordinary manner the great need for priests in the mission lands. There are now in 1946 approximately 8,000 native priests in the foreign mission fields, constituting more than two-fifths of all the clergy who labor there. They represent a contribution of five times more the number than the United States has given. There is an abundance of vocations, so great indeed that due to the lack of professors and housing, hundreds of applicants have to be turned away every year. For the priest who is most anxious about the need for vocations in the home mission, here is a way to foster vocations for the missions without depriving the home need. It should not be forgotten, however, at any time that this special blessing of God on the peoples of the mission lands is the result of unremitting efforts on the part of foreign missioners who have trained their charges so well

in a love for the priesthood. The need for foreign missioners is still very great.

The Association of the Holy Childhood

79. This association is distinct from the other two pontifical societies and has its own national director. The diocesan director of The Society for the Propagation of the Faith, however, is in most cases the diocesan director of the Association of the Holy Childhood. The headquarters of the Association of the Holy Childhood are located at 949 Lincoln Avenue, N.S., Pittsburgh, Pa.

80. Because this work is among children up to the age of twelve, the priest has at most to encourage the teachers in the Catholic schools to cooperate with the Association. While such encouragement may not seem very necessary to the priests, still it is in fact a powerful stimulant to the efforts of the teachers and simplifies their work with the children. In parishes where there are no diocesan schools, the priest has a unique opportunity through this Association to teach little children an apostolic love of souls. Through the Christian Doctrine classes, he meets the children regularly and can encourage them in this rapidly expanding work. The prizes awarded gratis by the National Office of the Association and the opportunity for having the children's pictures in the monthly magazine will sustain interest not only in the Association but also in the Christian Doctrine classes themselves.

7.
The Missionary Cooperation Plan

81. The whole program outlined above would be incomplete if the priest and the people were not given inspiration by personal contact with missioners themselves. Filled as they are with an apostolic love of souls, the missioners can best give it to others.

Moreover, because the program has not been fully realized, no mission can subsist on the contributions through the Pontifical Mission Aid Societies alone. The Pontifical Mission Aid Societies at present care for the needs of 562 ecclesiastical divisions (steadily increasing) by giving an equal initial subsidy to each one and in special cases an additional extraordinary allocation. When one considers that the United States supplies only about five per cent of all the personnel on the missions, it is not surprising that the aggregate actual subsidy to vicariates in charge of American missioners is much less than the share they would receive if the American contributions were divided among them alone. If indeed it were so divided, the vast majority of the missions would be materially handicapped. For these reasons, the Society for the Propagation of the Faith in America has organized the Missionary Cooperation Plan.

82. The purpose of this plan is twofold. Primarily, it aims to enable every mission Order and congregation to make itself known to every parish in the country. In this way, the people will broaden their view of the mission activity of the Church and will be disabused of provincial loyalties and of misconceptions about the extent of the effort. For the mission Orders and congregations, it will enable them to make appeals for vocations and establish contact with the people directly. The secondary aim (which is vitally important at this stage of the development of the Pontifical Mission Aid Societies) is to give every Order and congregation in the country an opportunity to appeal for financial aid. The execution of the plan differs in the details of execution in various sections of the country but an illustration will suffice. Imagine a diocese, let us say, of one hundred parishes. These are divided into twenty groups of five each. Each group is so graded from the point of view of financial contribution that it will contribute about the same as any other.

83. The Diocesan Director of The Society for the Propagation of the Faith invites every mission Order and congregation to participate. The first twenty are permitted to preach the first year. Those who made their requests too late are allowed to do so the next year. Any Order is permitted to make appeals in as

many dioceses as it can spare priests. Thus the Orders with larger personnel and greater needs are not discriminated against. The smaller Orders or those less known are given an equal chance with all to put their cause before the people. This plan is a most efficient means of mission propaganda. Heretofore, small parishes were rarely visited by the missioners themselves except at very infrequent intervals. Now, however, in any given year every single parish in a diocese is given a mission talk. Vocations do not flourish necessarily in the large parishes alone nor are their contributions the only ones acceptable to God. The gross annual financial contribution to the missions gained by appeals of missioners has increased noticeably in every diocese where the plan is in operation. Up to the present, not every diocese has accepted the plan.

8.
Conclusion

84. It would seem that the prosecution of all the aims of the Missionary Union of the Clergy would lead both priest and people to forget the immediate needs of their own parish because of the time and effort required. Actually, all that is required is the infusion of a new spirit—the mission spirit—into many of the parish activities. Only one dollar a year is expected from each member of the parish. For those who pray regularly, it will be no hardship to include the missions in their prayers. As for the priest himself, a daily remembrance in the Mass, Divine Office and the Rosary would be a most generous contribution. Recruitment of vocations and assisting the diocesan director of The Society for the Propagation of the Faith in mission propaganda are works in which he is already engaged.

85. On the other hand, the Missionary Union endeavors to enliven the mission spirit by consciously uniting all the usual efforts of the priest and giving them a universal meaning. His vision will be broadened to take in the whole Mystical Body of Christ and no matter where he is, whether he is working for forty families or four thousand, the significance of his work will

be the same. No more thorough a schedule for the sanctification of souls could be given a priest. By encouraging love for the foreign and home missions, he includes in his program every soul that comes into this world. Yet at the same time, this universal vision is not merely a vague objective, so nebulous and vast that it makes any particular work seem unimportant and useless in view of all that has to be done to accomplish the ultimate objective—the salvation of every soul that comes into this world. Instead, the priest is given a very definite objective—the sanctification of his own parishioners by integrating them in their thinking and doing in the whole Mystical Body of Christ. His work for these souls is clearly outlined—prayer, propaganda and encouragement. Even the objects of the prayer and propaganda are supplied him. The courage that he is to give others will be a necessary result of the degree of his own interest.

86. From another source, too, will his own courage and hope come in great abundance—the Holy Father. The Missionary Union of the Clergy is the Holy Father's own and single Society for priests to aid the missions. It was to St. Peter that Christ said, "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for thee that thy faith may not fail; and do thou when once thou hast turned again, strengthen thy brethren." (*St. Luke* 22; 31 ff.) It was to St. Peter that Christ said, "Feed my lambs," (*St. John* 21; 15). And it is Peter through Pius today who strengthens the faith of all priests and through them feeds the lambs of Christ. It is Peter through Pius who has founded the Missionary Union of the Clergy to strengthen the priests and feed the flock. And it is Pius today whom the might and wisdom of God surround to sanctify the world. The gates of hell shall not prevail against him. In this world where there are 1,700,000,000 starving to an eternal death, the voice of Pius before any other voice in the Church should be heard. Pius desires that every priest be a member of the Missionary Union of the Clergy.

9.

Bibliography

1. *A History of the Catholic Church*—Mourret-Thompson, Bruce Publishing Co. The first three volumes of this work are a rich source of biographies of priests and bishops, placed in their historical setting.

2. *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* by Boylan, especially chapters 9-10 and 11.

3. Cardinal McCroy's *Commentaries on the Epistles to the Corinthians*. The First Epistle should be the never-failing source of courage for priests who feel they are making little headway with their people. The Second Epistle should be the vademecum for priests who feel that they are not appreciated by their people.

4. Any fairly full dogmatic treatise on the Sacrament of the Most Holy Eucharist.

5. Any fairly full dogmatic treatise on the marks of unity and catholicity of the Church.

6. The two papal encyclicals on the missions: *Maxime Illud* of Benedict XV, and *Rerum Ecclesiae* of Pius XI.

7. There is no really satisfactory commentary published in English on *The Acts of the Apostles*.

10.
Study Outline

Gerald C. Treacy, S.J.

Part 1. Paragraphs 1-26

Every priest knows that the mission of the Church is to all men simultaneously. So he knows the need of foreign missions. Yet to many occurs the thought: "Would it not be better to concentrate our efforts at home?"

This attitude is not modern. It was present in the early Church. Many thought that the first mission of the Church should be to the Jews. We owe it to St. Paul that the true Catholic attitude prevailed. He a Jew of Jews became the first foreign missioner. His first epistle to the Thessalonians shows his wide vision of the Catholic apostolate.

St. Paul is the outstanding exemplar of the Church's catholicity, of her unity amidst multiplicity. He turned his face to the Gentiles but he never forgot the Jews.

St. Peter, too, was an active missioner. Though the Gospel for the circumcised was given to him, he was the first to defend the baptism of uncircumcised pagans. He had the universal vision of the Catholic apostolate. Not every Apostle had this.

Questions

What marks the Church as the true Church of Christ?

Why should not the home field be first developed and then the missions?

What was the position of the Synagogue in the non-Jewish world?

Why is St. Paul called the first foreign missioner?

What do the first few chapters of the first epistle to the Thessalonians reveal?

What is the single thread of unity in the first epistle to the Corinthians?

What is St. Paul the exemplar of?

What did St. Paul not tolerate?
How did St. Peter regard the position of the Gentile converts?
Were all the Apostles at one with St. Peter and St. Paul in their attitude toward the pagans?

Part 2. Paragraphs 27-47

St. Paul was a great missioner because he was keenly aware of the Mystical Body of Christ. Whatever he did he did as a fully formed member of this fully formed Body. He realized that whatever he did in his place as a member of the Body, the whole Body did. For he and the rest of the Church were "all one in Christ Jesus."

Herein for the priest lies the source of a world vision. He is not working for the Mystical Body but the whole Mystical Body is working through him. The important thing for every member is to have charity. Charity is the life blood of the Mystical Body.

As the Mystical Body is the visible Church, it is for the Vicar of Christ to determine a place as a mission. This means a call to each member of the Body that Christ needs most help in this place. No member is exempt from that call. At no time in the Church's history has there been greater need for hearkening to that call than today.

The parish priest has a most important part in the Mystical Body. Without his help the work of missioners would never be completed. His work and that of the missioner are harmonious but distinct activities of the Mystical Body of Christ. The missionary Union of the Clergy stresses this. Besides it unifies priestly missionary effort. The *Unio Cleri* is the Voice of Peter telling the whole world through his priests that every Catholic by reason of Baptism is a missioner, according to his place in the Mystical Body.

Questions

On what was St. Paul's consistency based?
How should the priest regard the Mystical Body and his place in it?

Whom does St. Paul give first place to in the Mystical Body?
What is the lifeblood of the Mystical Body?
"Outside the Church no salvation." Explain.
How do the missions depend on the parish priest?
Does the Mystical Body function like a machine?
What is the Missionary Union of the Clergy?

Part 3. Paragraphs 48-86

The idea of the *Unio Cleri* is to organize priestly mission aid. The parish priest is able to make his people mission-minded and so aid the missions as nobody else can. The means employed by the *Unio Cleri* are prayer, propaganda, fostering vocations, conversion work for schismatics and heretics, and stimulating the growth of the Pontifical Mission Aid Societies.

Of all mission aid societies the Society for the Propagation of the Faith holds first place. It is the wish of the Holy See that membership in this society should precede membership in any other. Every Catholic should be a member. The aim of the Society of St. Peter the Apostle is to increase the number of native clergy. The purpose of the Association of the Holy Childhood is to stimulate interest for the missions among children.

The idea of the Missionary Cooperation plan is to enable every missionary group to make itself known to the people and appeal for financial aid. The execution of the plan differs in detail in different sections of the country. Where it is adopted justice is done to all missionary groups, mission-mindedness is widespread and financial help to the missions is increased.

Questions

What is the aim of the *Unio Cleri* and what are the means used in its attainment?
What does it teach the parish priest?
How may the parish priest aid mission propaganda?
How did Cardinal Villeneuve explain the meaning of a vocation?

Does the practice of the Church endorse the Cardinal's view?

What have Popes Benedict XV and Pius XI said of the *Unio Cleri?*

What are the three Pontifical mission aid societies and their aims?

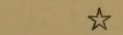
What are the conditions of membership in these societies?

Explain the Missionary Cooperation Plan.

If parishioners become mission-minded will their parish interest decrease?

A Note on the Author

The Rev. Joseph J. Tennant, S.T.D., L.S.S., is a priest of the diocese of Brooklyn. After having taught classics in the diocesan minor seminary, he became professor of Sacred Scripture at the major seminary, Huntington, Long Island. At the outbreak of the war, he was appointed assistant chancellor of the Military Ordinariate. For the past two years he has been National Secretary of the Society of St. Peter the Apostle for Native Clergy. In this capacity and also as representative of the National Office of The Society for the Propagation of the Faith, he has visited all but very few of the dioceses of the country on behalf of the Missionary Academia of the Unio Cleri and has met the student body of more than seventy seminaries. He is a member of the Advisory Board and Coordinating Committee of the Missionary Academia Studies for the Major Seminaries.



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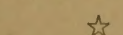

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